



Election Modernization Committee

Date: **February 9, 2021**

Time: **7:30-9:00pm**

Location: **Conducted by Remote Participation**

Minutes

Members in attendance: Adam Badik, Juliana Brazile, Joseph Curro, Greg Dennis, Walter Horn, William Logan, Patti Muldoon, James O'Connor, Maxwell Palmer, Paul Parravano, Juhan Sonin, Jennifer Susse, Lesley Waxman

1. Executive Order on Remote Participation

Jim reviewed the Governor's executive order on remote participation.

2. Approval or Changes to the Meeting Agenda

Jim entertained a motion to adopt the agenda.

Paul moved to adopt the agenda. Juli seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. New Member Interviews - Thursday Feb 11

Jim informed us that the Select Board received four applications for the under-25 seat on the committee. He, Joe, and Greg will be interviewing the candidates on February 11th, and they met in advance to plan the questions they would ask.

4. Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Greg said that he submitted our Ranked Choice Voting warrant article to the Select Board and that the Board acknowledged receipt of it.

5. Ranked Choice Voting follow-up

Greg noted that one of the proposed amendments to our Ranked Choice Voting motion at Special Town Meeting last year was that the question be approved by voters on a town-wide ballot. He said that voter approval was something he expected the legislature

would require anyway and that he favored including it directly in the text of the motion. He noted that the question of whether to move from an elected to appointed Treasurer in 2018 was subject to voter approval in a similar way. There was unanimous agreement to include that additional language in the main motion.

Greg raised the issue as to whether multiseat town offices should be elected proportionally, as was originally proposed last year, or by the block method proposed in an amendment by Adam Auster, who made his case at our last meeting. Most members were in agreement that the proportional approach was the best method of election in principle, because it best reflects the diverse viewpoints of the voters. However, there was disagreement as to whether the proportional proposal was politically viable. Some argued the committee should advance the block method, because while it would not improve the quality of elections as much as the proportional one, it would be an easier sell to Town Meeting and the voters. Others countered that as long as we are changing the voting system, we ought to pursue the superior proportional method.

The committee took a vote on whether to advance the block or the proportional approach for multiseat offices. The vote was 7-6 in favor of the proportional method.

6. Tentative Featured Speaker - TBA

There was no featured speaker.

7. Update on Annual Town Election, Sat. April 10, 8AM-8PM

Juli said it was unclear whether the legislature would extend the vote-by-mail provisions in place for the last town election, but even if they do, it would be too late for the town to make use of them. The legislature *may* pass no-excuse absentee balloting in time, which would be a help, but regardless we are still likely to have a town election in which most vote in-person at their precinct, like a traditional pre-COVID election.

8. Public Comment and or questions

None.

9. New Business

Joe announced that he would be stepping down from the Select Board, and so this would be his last meeting on the committee.

10. Draft Minutes for Review, Edits and Approval

Walter moved to approve the minutes from October. Bill seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Paul moved to approve the minutes from November. Juhan seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Joe moved to approve the minutes from January. Lesley seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

11. Adjournment

Before adjourning, we set our next meeting date for Tuesday, March 9th at 7:30pm.

Paul moved to adjourn. Max seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:13pm.